

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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COME-00 /063 W

-----071338Z 053484 /50

R 070915Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9823

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL SONGHLA

AMCONSUL UDORN

CINCPAC HONOLULU

DIA WASHDC

JUSMAGTHAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 4903

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJECT: THAI INSURGENCY - VIOLENCE CONTINUES

REF: BANGKOK 3918, DTG-181007Z FEB 77

1. TWO VIOLENT ACTIONS ON MARCH 3, 1977, UNDERLINED THE FACT THAT VIOLENCE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE IS A CONTINUED FEATURE OF THAILAND'S COMMUNIST INSURGENCY. IN CHIANG RAI PROVINCE, 29 CIVILIAN VILLAGERS WERE KILLED AND 15 OTHERS WOUNDED IN COMMUNIST TERRORIST (CT) AMBUSH AS THEY WERE RETURNING FROM A PARTY IN CONJUNCTION WITH A PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE COURSE THEY HAD JUST COMPLETED. IN PETCHABURI PROVINCE, THE NORMALLY INACTIVE WEST CENTRAL CT GROUP ATTACKED A BORDER OUTPOST KILLING FIVE AND WOUNDING SEVEN, ALTHOUGH SUSTAINING CASUALTIES THEMSELVES.

2. THE CHIANG RAI AMBUSH WAS A DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL CT OPERATIONS IN THAT IN THE PAST THEY HAVE USUALLY
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AVOIDED DIRECT ATTACKS ON THE CIVILIAN POPULACE. IT IS POSSIBLE, AS WAS SPECULATED IN THE PRESS, THAT THE VILLAGERS WERE MISTAKEN FOR ROYAL THAI GOVERNMENT (RTG) FORCES; HOWEVER, IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN RETALIATION FOR THE VILLAGERS HAVING ATTENDED SIANG CHAO BAN (VOICE OF THE VILLAGERS) TRAINING CONDUCTED BY PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE TEAMS FROM THE ROYAL THAI ARMY SPECIAL WARFARE CENTER.

IF THIS IS TRUE, THE ATTACK WAS INTENDED AS A WARNING TO OTHER VILLAGERS NOT TO COOPERATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT. US CONSUL CHIANG MAI POINTS OUT THAT THE AMBUSH MAY BE INDICATIVE OF THE SUCCESS OF SUCH PSYWAR PROGRAMS, AS THE AREA IS ONE INTO WHICH THE RTG HAS ONLY RECENTLY MOVED TO ESTABLISH A PRESENCE, USING POLITICAL PROGRAMS.

3. THE PHETCHABURI ATTACK IS THE FIRST INCIDENT OF THIS NATURE IN THA YANG DISTRICT IN APPROXIMATELY FOUR YEARS AND MAY INDICATE A NEW AGGRESSIVENESS AND/OR CAPABILITY ON THE PART OF THE WEST CENTRAL CT GROUP, WHICH ALSO CONDUCTED A HARASSEMENT AGAINST AN RTG BORDER PATROL PLATOON IN PRACHUAP KHIRI KHAN PROVINCE IN EARLY JANUARY. THE POLICE ESTIMATE THAT IN THE MARCH 3 ATTACK, THEY KILLED AS MANY OF 10 CT, ALTHOUGH THEY RECOVERED ONLY THREE CT BODIES.

4. COMPLETE REPORTING IS NOT YET AVAILABLE FOR FEBRUARY. THEREFORE, WE CANNOT YET DETERMINE IF THE LEVEL OF VIOLENT ACTION HAS BEEN HIGHER THAN USUAL FOR DRY SEASON OPERATIONS; HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT ACTIVITY WAS HIGHER IN FEBRUARY THAN IN JANUARY. IN A ROUTINE RELEASE OF STATISTICS, THE INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS CENTER REPORTED THAT DURING THE WEEK OF FEBRUARY 21 TO 27, INCIDENTS OCCURRED IN 12 PROVINCES SCATTERED WHRROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND CLAIMED 11 RTG KILLED AND 57 WOUNDED WHILE THE RTG MANAGED TO INFLICT CASUALTIES OF 17 CT KILLED, AND SOME BANDIT/SEPARATISTS KILLED AND WOUNDED. MONTHLY TOTALS FOR FEBRUARY WILL BE TRANSMITTED WHEN AVAILABLE VIA THE MONTHLY INSURGENCY/CONFIDENTIAL

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COUNTERINSURGENCY REPORT.
WHITEHOUSE

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